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STATEMENT TO BE DELIVERED

ON BEHALF OF GHANA BY H.E. MRS MARTHA A. A. POBEE
AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GHANA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

DURING THE INFORMAL INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE ON THE
REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON THE
RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT ON TUESDAY, 6TH SEPTEMBER,
2016, UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK

6TH SEPTEMBER, 2016

Mr. Moderator,

At the outset, let me express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary General for his very comprehensive report, which raises critical questions for the continuing debate on the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). My delegation also takes this opportunity to welcome the appointment of Ivan Simonovic as the new Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect.

We are particularly encouraged by the focus of the Secretary General's report entitled "Mobilizing Collective Action: the Next Decade of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P)." The core issues of the report provide an excellent basis for setting an agenda for the next decade of the responsibility to protect, and in particular our assessment of the barriers to the implementation of R2P, and how to counter them and to work towards effective and coordinated preventive strategies, timely and decisive responses, prevention of recurrence and renewed institutional capacity for R2P. Ghana shares the view that these are important questions that must guide our next steps to gain wider commitment to the implementation of the concept.

Mr. Moderator,

As indicated in the Secretary-General's report, the frequency and scale of atrocity crimes have increased in recent years and until the international community

takes determined and consistent action to fulfill the principle of R2P, we ran the risk of further erosion of the ability of our Organization to fulfill its mandate to protect vulnerable populations from atrocity crimes. As the world continues to experience protracted and complex conflicts, violent extremism and other risk factors threatening the established international norms, promoting and sustaining political support for the R2P becomes even more critical, hence the primacy of continued dialogue and action on this matter.

We, therefore, welcome the focus of the report on the need for member states to deliver on their political commitments and to make efforts towards the implementation of the principle. While acknowledging that much progress has been made at the political level to the R2P concept, some questions and concerns have been expressed about the operationalization of the responsibility to protect in relation to the three pillars of the framework for implementation; the basis for undertaking collective action in response to situations where States are failing to protect populations; and the basis for consideration of the use of military force. These still remain and these must be tackled. However, Ghana shares the view that these questions should not stand in the way of the higher objective of saving and protecting the lives of vulnerable populations.

A number of actions have been proposed in the report of the Secretary-General report that deserves serious consideration. I wish to mention in particular the need for increased focus on preventive action through refinement of early

warning mechanisms and improved risk analysis and increased institutionalized collaboration with regional and sub-regional bodies. Effective and coordinative preventive strategies require the active involvement of local actors, national governments, regional and sub-regional bodies and the examples of the UN's collaboration with African Union and ECOWAS in a number of interventions are noteworthy. Ghana believes that the broad range of peaceful tools available to us must be utilized.

Mr. Moderator,

As we take stock of how far we have come and the achievements of R2P in the last ten years, in a bid to chart a path for the future, my delegation acknowledges the work of the two Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and Responsibility to Protect in the institutionalization of the R2P concept. We reiterate the critical role of the National R2P Focal Points and welcome the appointments of Focal Points, while encouraging Member states to appoint Focal points to join the Global Network of Focal Point in our collective efforts in preventing crimes of impunity. In our resolve to prevent these crimes, my delegation also calls upon the Permanent Members of the Security Council to exercise good leadership in situations of these grave crimes and refrain from the use of the veto.

My delegation reaffirms its commitment to paragraphs 138 and 139 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document on the Responsibility to Protect and calls

for the need to mainstream the issue of R2P into the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly. In this regard, we believe that it would be necessary to factor the concept into work the various processes that have been initiated by the Secretary General following the important review processes in the area of peacekeeping, peace-building, implementation of the Security Council Resolution 1325 and the protection of civilians. The overall UN peacebuilding architecture and the recent adoption of the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians endorsed by 35 member states including Ghana, address issues that touch on the protection of civilians, women, children and those in vulnerable situations as well as prevention of sexual violence and mass atrocity crimes in situations of armed conflict. All of these lead to and strengthen the case for sustaining the principle of responsibility to protect.

We also support the call by the Secretary General for a demonstration by Member States of their deeper commitment and reaffirmation of the principle of R2P through the consideration and adoption of a new General Assembly resolution on the subject that will guide our work towards the next decade.

I thank you.